

**STAFF REPORT  
HISTORIC AND CULTURAL LANDMARKS COMMISSION  
CITY OF FORT WORTH, TEXAS**

**DATES:** 13 September 2010

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** 8

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

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<b>REQUEST</b>	Historic designation change from HC to HSE
<b>APPLICANT/AGENT</b>	Elvia Ransom McBride & Alfred McBride/Sarah Walker
<b>LOCATION</b>	1115 E Terrell Avenue
<b>ZONING/ USE (S)</b>	A-5/HC
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION</b>	Historic Southside

**DESIGNATION**

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The applicant requests historic designation change from Historic and Cultural Landmark (HC) to Historic Significant Endangered (HSE). The structure meets the following criteria for historic designation:

- 1) Criteria 1: Distinctive in character, interest or value; strongly exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, ethnic or historical heritage of the City of Fort Worth, State of Texas, or the United States.
- 2) Criteria 2: An important example of a particular architectural type or specimen in the City of Fort Worth.
- 3) Criteria 4: Embodies elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural innovation.
- 3) Criteria 5: Bears an important and significant relationship to other distinctive structures, sites, or areas, either as an important collection of properties of architectural style or craftsmanship with few intrusions, or by contributing to the overall character of the area according to a plan based on architectural, historic or cultural motif.
- 4) Criteria 8: Is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the City of Fort Worth, State of Texas, or the United States.
- 5) Criteria 9: Represents a resource, whether natural or man-made, which greatly contributes to the character or image of a defined neighborhood or community area.
- 6) Criteria 10: Is included on the National Register of Historic Places.

## **FINDINGS / RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **The Neighborhood:**

The Near Southeast Neighborhood (locally designated as Terrell Heights) is a historic African-American neighborhood located about a mile southeast of downtown Fort Worth. Most of the additions comprising the neighborhood were platted in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The first residents were working class Anglo-Americans, but by the 1910s, African-Americans had begun to migrate from the neighborhoods just east of downtown Fort Worth to the area around East Terrell Avenue. They were joined by other African-Americans who moved to Fort Worth seeking better opportunities.

Those moving into the area were educators, ministers, doctors, business people, domestics, and laborers for such industries as the railroads and the Fort Worth Stockyards. The residential housing stock varied from modest wooden folk and bungalow forms to brick Period Revival and larger Prairie School-inspired homes. The neighborhood became home to several African American churches, social institutions, a modern theater, a small park, and a thriving commercial corridor on Evans Avenue between East Terrell Avenue and East Rosedale Street. It began to decline in the 1960s as residents moved out of the area.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Building and Its Residents:**

The Ransom House was constructed c1921. (Figures 3 and 4) It is a two-story structure with Prairie and Craftsman detailing including deep eaves, exposed rafter tails, and hipped roof. A gable-front, half-width porch with oversized brackets along the eaves is a prominent feature of the house and also characteristic of Craftsman and Prairie architecture. The four triple window units on the front elevation may be a link to the Colonial Revival architectural style that was also popular at the time of construction. A porte-cochere accents the house on the east side. Exterior details such as windows and doors appear to be unchanged.

Dr. R.A. Ransom and his wife Davalia lived in the house with their son, Dr. R.A. Ransom, Jr. and his wife Essie. Dr. Ransom was the first African-American physician in Tarrant County and founded the first African-American hospital in Fort Worth, the Ethel Ransom Hospital. Both doctors and their wives who were nurses are associated with the Ethel Ransom Hospital, located at 1200 East First Street. Dr. Ransom also served as the president of the Lone Star Medical Association, an organization of African-Americans in the health field.<sup>2</sup>

The house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002 as a contributing structure in the Near Southeast Historic District.

### **Recommendation:**

The Ransom House meets at least 5 of the 10 criteria designation which is consistent with the requirements of the ordinance for Highly Significant Endangered (HSE) properties. Staff recommends approval for the designation change and continued use of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation along with the Terrell Heights Historic District standards and guidelines to be used when evaluating any proposed alterations.

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from the Near Southeast National Register Historic District nomination. The Near Southeast neighborhood is one block west of the church. The Near Southeast National Register Historic District was designated in 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

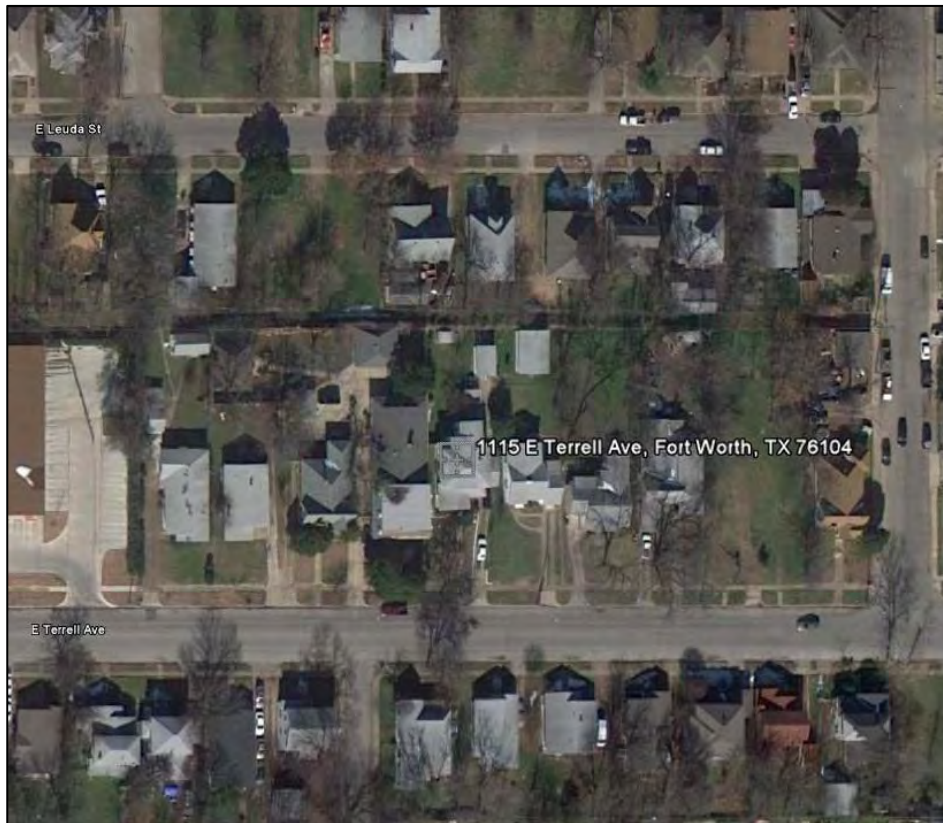


Figure 1. Aerial

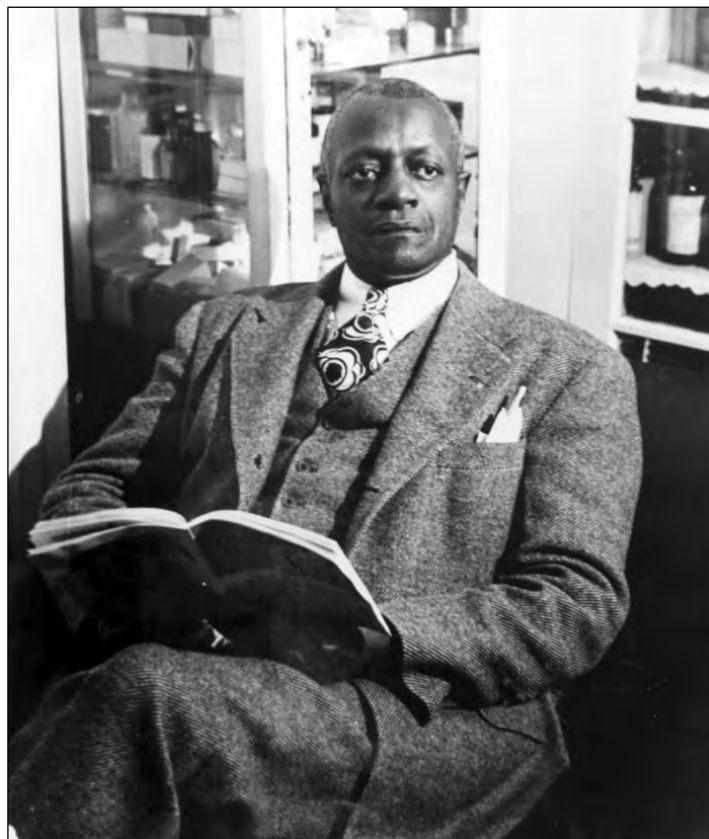


Figure 2. Dr. R.A. Ransom  
(from The Portal to Texas History; original image  
located at Tarrant County College Northeast, Heritage Room)





Figure 3. Front elevation, August 2010



Figure 4. Front elevation, c. 2002

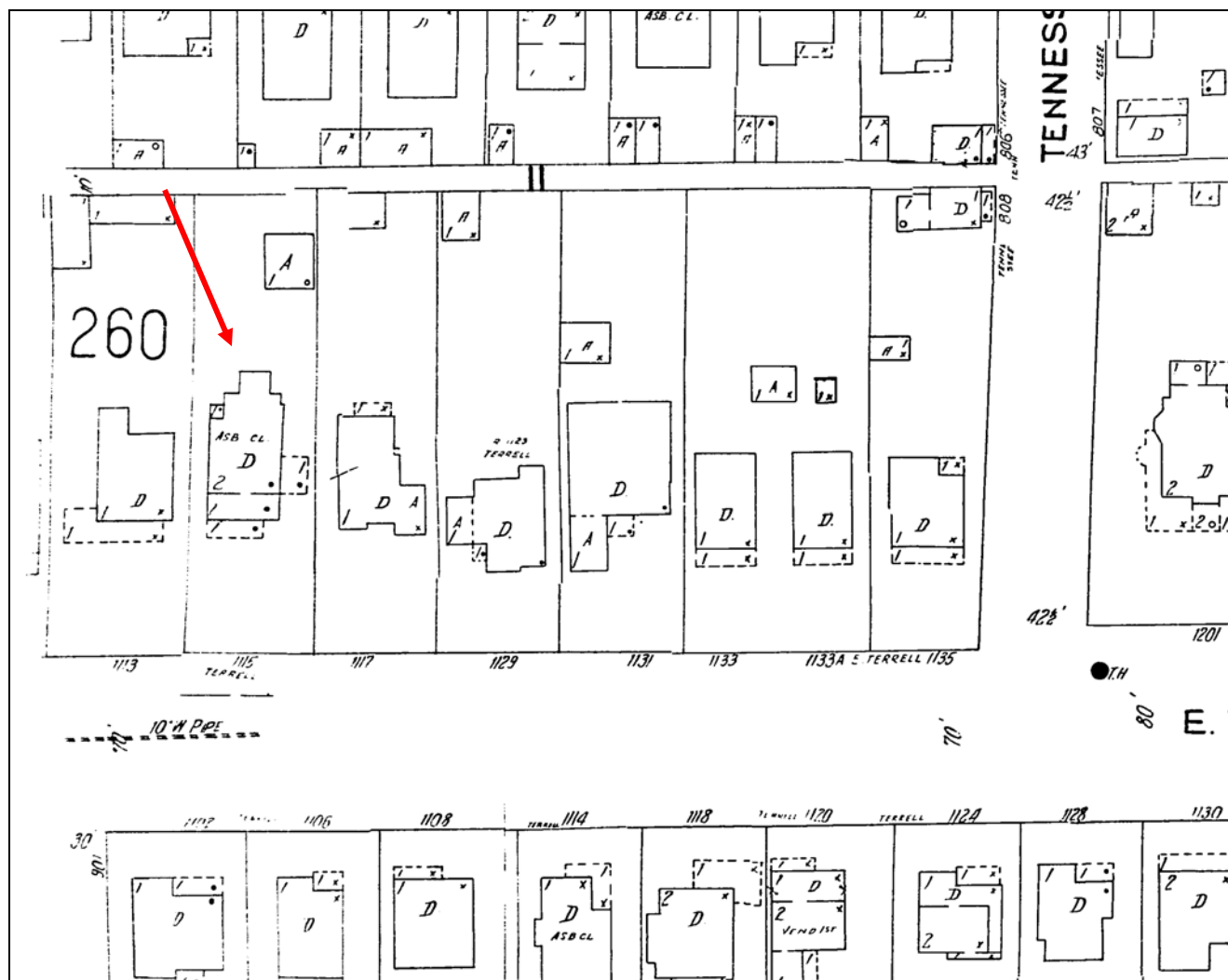


Figure 5. Sanborn map, 1910/1951 updates